

THE LIFE SCIENCE INDUSTRY



From kits to instruments, Web sites to sales reps, we present “The Scientist’s Choice”

By Jeffrey M. Perkel, Aileen Constans, and Julia Shmirkin

In terms of innovation, the life science industry has few peers. Fighting for clients in a crowded marketplace, biotech design teams cannot content themselves with mere technical wizardry. Success also demands simplicity, ergonomics, and above all, necessity.

In short, the life science industry is awash in ingenuity, excellence, and innovation. Yet until now, none of these qualities was formally acknowledged. Recognizing that shortcoming, *The Scientist* set out to give you, our readers, the opportunity to reward those companies whose innovative products have simplified your lives and sped the pace of your research. The result is the first annual Life Science Industry Awards (LSIA).

“Unlike many industry-based awards, the Life Science Industry Awards are not mutual back-slapping by the participants in the industry, but are awarded by the industry’s own customers—the scientists in biotech and pharma companies, in government and academia—who use their products,” says Alexander Grimwade, publisher of *The Scientist*. “It is our hope that these awards will become a source of pride and a touchstone of excellence for all the companies that participate in the life science industry.”

“Rarely in the spotlight of public attention and with product lines that range from the mundane to the truly amazing, biotech tools companies are the foundation upon which biotechnology research rests,” says Bill Kelly, president of BioInformatics, the Arlington, Va.-based market-research firm that conducted the survey. “The small niche occupied by these companies and the esoteric applications for which their products are intended obscure a vibrant and exciting market where buyers and sellers interact in ways both familiar and strange.”

Like life-science Oscars, we probed for your favorites in 18 categories ranging from best supplier of cell biology instrumentation to best print catalog; more than 3,000 of you stepped up to cast ballots. But we didn’t merely tally votes; the survey also gauged your level of satisfaction with the companies you nominated. The result is a survey that reveals not only who you like, but also why.

The why’s ranged from technical excellence, to reliability, to ease of use. As for the who’s, the finalists you selected represent the depth and breadth of the life science industry.

The roster places giants such as Invitrogen, BD Biosciences, Applied Biosystems, and GE Healthcare alongside smaller niche companies such as New England Biolabs, Ambion, and DNASTar.

On Dec. 6, big companies and small companies alike will join *The Scientist*, BioInformatics, and several hundred scientists and industry luminaries at the Renaissance Washington Hotel in Washington, DC, to watch noted science communicator Ira Flatow (host of National Public Radio’s *Science Friday*) announce the crème de la crème of the life science industry.

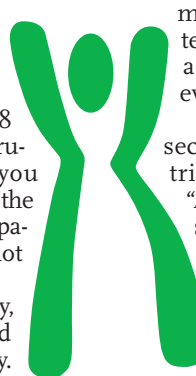
For those of you who cannot be there to celebrate with us, we present here the winners of this year’s awards. We hope you will join us in congratulating all of our finalists.

THE ENVELOPE, PLEASE Not surprisingly, industry heavyweights dominated the voting. Biotech giant Invitrogen of Carlsbad, Calif., led all companies with 13 nominations, winning in seven categories: three for products and four for customer communications and support.

“We are extremely honored to have been nominated as a finalist in 13 different categories of the Life Science Industry Awards,” writes Ben Bulkley, senior vice president, global commercial operations at Invitrogen, in an E-mail. (Companies contacted for this article were told only that they were finalists, not whether they had won any awards.) “We have worked continually over the past few years to take a good company and make it great for our customers. To be recognized for this tells us that we are on the right track and encourages us as we strive to make our customers’ path to discovery even easier.”

Bio-Rad Laboratories of Hercules, Calif., which came in second with eight nominations, won two awards, as did triple-finalist Applied Biosystems of Foster City, Calif.

“Applied Biosystems has been serving the needs of the life sciences industry for more than 20 years,” says company president Cathy Bruzick in an E-mail. “The company has continually introduced innovative products that become industry standard systems to help customers solve complex biological problems, we feel that our success has largely been based on our relationships



FEATURE

THE LIFE SCIENCE INDUSTRY AWARDS

“The Scientist’s Choice”

CELL BIOLOGY KITS AND REAGENTS

WINNER: **Invitrogen**

FINALISTS: • *BD Biosciences* • *Qiagen*

CELL BIOLOGY INSTRUMENTATION

WINNER: **BD Biosciences**

FINALISTS: • *Bio-Rad* • *Carl Zeiss*

CELL CULTURE MEDIA, EQUIPMENT AND REAGENTS

WINNER: **Invitrogen**

FINALISTS: • *BD Biosciences* • *Sigma-Aldrich*

EXPRESSION ANALYSIS PRODUCTS

WINNER: **Invitrogen**

FINALISTS: • *Amersham (GE Healthcare)* • *Applied Biosystems*

HIGH THROUGHPUT SCREENING AND ANALYSIS SYSTEMS

WINNER: **Applied Biosystems**

FINALISTS: • *Affymetrix* • *Invitrogen*

IMAGE ANALYSIS SYSTEMS

WINNERS: **Bio-Rad** • **Carl Zeiss**

FINALIST: *Kodak Scientific*

INSTRUMENTATION FOR GENOMIC ANALYSIS

WINNER: **Applied Biosystems**

FINALISTS: • *Affymetrix* • *Bio-Rad*

INSTRUMENTATION FOR PROTEIN ANALYSIS

WINNER: **Bio-Rad**

FINALISTS: • *Amersham (GE Healthcare)* • *Invitrogen*

NUCLEIC ACID PURIFICATION AND ANALYSIS PRODUCTS

WINNER: **Qiagen**

FINALISTS: • *Invitrogen* • *Promega*

PROTEIN PURIFICATION AND ANALYSIS PRODUCTS

WINNER: **Amersham (GE Healthcare)**

FINALISTS: • *Bio-Rad* • *Pierce*

RNAi PRODUCTS

WINNER: **Ambion**

FINALISTS: • *Dharmacon* • *Invitrogen*

SOFTWARE

WINNER: **Accelrys**

FINALISTS: • *DNASStar* • *Spotfire*

PRINT ADVERTISEMENT

WINNER: **Invitrogen**

FINALISTS: • *Amersham (GE Healthcare)* • *Bio-Rad*

PRINT CATALOG

WINNER: **New England Biolabs**

FINALISTS: • *Invitrogen* • *Sigma-Aldrich*

CUSTOMER SERVICE

WINNER: **Sigma-Aldrich**

FINALISTS: • *Bio-Rad* • *Invitrogen*

SALES REPRESENTATIVES

WINNER: **Invitrogen**

FINALISTS: • *Amersham (GE Healthcare)* • *Bio-Rad*

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

WINNER: **Invitrogen**

FINALISTS: • *Amersham (GE Healthcare)* • *Sigma-Aldrich*

WEBSITE

WINNER: **Invitrogen**

FINALISTS: • *BD Biosciences* • *Sigma-Aldrich*



FEATURE

with our customers. By listening to, and anticipating, the needs of our customers, we are able to develop solutions that not only meet, but often exceed our customers' expectations," she adds.

GE Healthcare of Chalfont St. Giles, UK, received six nominations, winning one LSIA for protein purification and analysis products. "We are proud to have been nominated by readers of *The Scientist* in a number of categories for this year's Life Science Industry Awards," says spokesperson Helen Longvill. "It underscores our commitment to developing life science products of real value to researchers. GE Healthcare (formerly Amersham Biosciences) understands customer needs and works to create innovative solutions to meet those challenges."

Sigma-Aldrich of St. Louis, Mo., garnered five nominations and won one LSIA, for best customer service. Mary Bettis, director of customer service in St. Louis, says the company's customer service team focuses on three elements: quality systems, customized service, and efficiency. "All of these concepts are interrelated and work together to create a comprehensive service experience that surpasses the customer's expectations. In essence, our goal is to make it easy to do business with Sigma-Aldrich," she says.

BD Biosciences of San Jose, Calif., received four nominations and took home the award for cell biology instrumentation. David Matsuyama, research instrumentation product manager at BD Biosciences, relates how the company stays at the cutting edge of technology innovation. "Over two years ago, BD's special-order group developed a flow cytometer with the ability to detect up to 18 colors. At the time, the routine number of colors researchers were detecting was four, and some high-end researchers were collecting eight colors. BD Biosciences ... took on the challenge to develop a flow cytometer that was beyond the conception of most people using flow cytometry as a research tool." That effort, he says, galvanized the growth of the multicolor flow cytometry industry.

Qiagen of Venlo, the Netherlands, garnered two nominations. In winning an LSIA for nucleic acid purification and analysis products, the company raked in more than half of all votes cast in that category—the best showing overall for any company in any class. Joachim Schorr, senior vice president for global R&D, explains the company's success in this category: "We have one rule, that we do not compromise on quality before we give out a product."

Also collecting two nominations was Carl Zeiss of Jena, Germany. Zeiss, which won Readers' Choice Awards (predecessors to the LSIA) in 2002 and 2003, tied with Bio-Rad to win the image-analysis systems category this year. Georg Weiss, director of sales and service for the microscope manufacturer, says, "I think we are the innovation leader, ahead of the competition in terms of features and performance."

Part of Zeiss' success, says Weiss, stems from a different corporate philosophy. "In a couple of microscope companies, it's still the physicists who decide what goes into the product," he says. "At Zeiss, we have the people with the application edge, the biologists, determining features." Zeiss' recent acquisition of Bio-Rad's image-analysis systems poises the company to dominate this category even more aggressively in the coming years.

Accelrys of San Diego won in the Software category. With titles ranging from Insight II and Cerius2 to MacVector and the GCG Wisconsin Package, Accelrys products are installed in public and private laboratories worldwide. "It's extremely rare to find a Life Science institution that isn't using one or more of our tools," says company spokesman Ian Clements. He attributes that market dominance, in part, to Accelrys' corporate philosophy. "We try to provide software solutions to problems, rather than just provide software with a list of features and benefits."

Also taking home LSIA were Ambion of Austin, Texas, which won for its RNAi products, and New England Biolabs of

Beverly, Mass., which was recognized for its print catalog. "I would say our catalog has a Grateful Dead cult-like following," says Jim Ellard, the company's director of marketing communications. With a focus on science—more than half the book is technical information—NEB's catalog is "a catalog you want on your lab bench," not on the shelf, he says.

But just as importantly, NEB's customers have grown accustomed, in the 20 years the company has been printing its catalog, to the book's style and content. "It's like an old friend, you know what you're going to get," says Ellard. And therein lies a lesson that transcends category boundaries: Whatever a company's focus, customer relations often sets a company apart from its competition.

"One of the reasons I believe we're successful is our ability to pull our scientific breadth together in reaction to our customers' needs," says Invitrogen's Bulkley. He cites the company's creation of a biodefense initiative. "We had customers looking to us for solutions in biodefense because we have many of the distinct technical elements needed to succeed in that space, but they found it difficult to put the pieces together themselves." So, he says, the company created an internal, stand-alone group that focuses exclusively on biodefense, "so that we could make sure that we had the right focus to bring the right solutions to our customers." ☒

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METHODOLOGY

The 2004 Life Science Industry Awards: *The Scientist's* Choice, are based on responses to a 31-question online survey conducted by BioInformatics of Arlington, Va. (www.gene2drug.com). The questionnaire was fielded to selected readers of *The Scientist* as well as registered members of the Science Advisory Board.

Sponsored by BioInformatics, the Science Advisory Board (www.scienceboard.net) is an online community of more than 22,700 scientists, physicians, and healthcare professionals from around the world. A total of 3,085 scientists participated in the survey, which was conducted between Sept. 23 and Oct. 8. As an incentive to participate, respondents were entered into a random drawing for one \$500 and five \$100 (US) honoraria from Amazon.com, to be awarded upon successful conclusion of the voting.

The winners for each category were first determined by quantitative measure of the number of nominations received by each supplier in the respective categories. If a difference of five percentage points or less was found between the top-ranked companies, then the final winner was determined by combining the number of nominations with the "customer value score." The customer value score calculation is based on answers to additional survey questions that measured customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Categories received an average of 1,055 votes each. The RNAi category received the fewest votes (257) of any category, reflecting the relatively small number of people yet to adopt the technique. The category for cell culture media, equipment, and reagents received the most votes (1,747).

As a consequence of mergers and acquisitions in the biotechnology industry, some supplier names have changed. Supplier names were interpreted and reclassified when necessary to provide consistent answers to questions. For more details, visit www.lifescienceindustryawards.com